United Nations A/CN.10/PV.218

General Assembly

Official Records

Disarmament Commission

218th Meeting
Friday, 27 March 1998, 10 a.m.
New York

Chairman: Mr. Garcia . . . . . (Colombia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.40 a.m.

The Chairman (*interpretation from Spanish*): I declare open the resumed organizational session and the 218th meeting of the Disarmament Commission.

As in past years, the Commission is convened today for a brief meeting to deal with organizational matters related to the 1998 substantive session, including the election of the Bureau for 1998, the appointment of the Chairmen of the subsidiary bodies of the Commission — the Working Groups — and the adoption of the provisional agenda for the forthcoming substantive session.

Adoption of the agenda

The Chairman (*interpretation from Spanish*): We turn now to the draft provisional agenda for the substantive session, which is contained in document A/CN.10/L.42. As members can see, it is basically the same as the draft provisional agenda that was considered by member States at the December meeting of the organizational session.

As there are no comments, may I take it that the Commission decides to adopt the provisional agenda contained in document A/CN.10/L.42?

It was so decided.

Election of the Chairman and other officers

The Chairman (*interpretation from Spanish*): I have been informed by the coordinator of the Group of Eastern European States that the First Deputy Foreign Minister of Belarus, Mr. Sergei Martynov, has been endorsed by that group for the chairmanship of the Disarmament Commission at its 1998 substantive session.

We all know Mr. Martynov as an accomplished diplomat and an experienced disarmament hand. Those of us who have had the opportunity to work with him during General Assembly sessions know Mr. Martynov's sterling qualities and will have fond memories of working with him on many occasions in a spirit of cooperation and harmony.

As there is no objection, may I take it that the Disarmament Commission elects Mr. Sergei Martynov, First Deputy Foreign Minister of Belarus, as Chairman for the 1998 substantive session by acclamation?

It was so decided.

The Chairman (*interpretation from Spanish*): Allow me on behalf of the Disarmament Commission to congratulate Mr. Martynov on his election and to ask Ambassador Sychou of Belarus to convey our greetings to him. I believe I speak for the entire Commission in wishing Mr. Martynov success in the tasks ahead of him, and in offering our complete cooperation ensuring the successful outcome of the Commission's deliberations.

I should like further to inform members that the Group of Eastern European States has nominated Mr. Vice Skračić, First Secretary of the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Croatia to the United Nations, to the post of Rapporteur for the 1998 substantive session.

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As there is no objection, may I take it that members decide to elect Mr. Vice Skračić as Rapporteur for the 1998 substantive session?

It was so decided.

The Chairman (*interpretation from Spanish*): On behalf of the members of the Commission, I congratulate Mr. Skračić on his election and assure him of the full cooperation of all his fellow officers and of all members of the Commission.

As members know, in conformity with established practice, each regional group designates two candidates for vice-chairmanships of the Commission. Two regional groups have selected candidates for these posts.

I am informed by the coordinator of the Group of Latin America and Caribbean States that the group has endorsed the candidatures of Mr. Emilio Izquierdo of Ecuador and Mr. Fernando Guillén of Peru for vice-chairmanships of the Commission.

I have also been informed by the coordinator of the Group of Western European and other States that that group has decided to endorse the candidature of Mr. Michael Hoey of Ireland for a vice-chairmanship.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Disarmament Commission to elect those three representatives as Vice-Chairmen of the Disarmament Commission for its 1998 substantive session?

It was so decided.

The Chairman (*interpretation from Spanish*): On behalf of the Disarmament Commission, I warmly congratulate Mr. Emilio Izquierdo of Ecuador, Mr. Fernando Guillén of Peru and Mr. Michael Hoey of Ireland on their election as Vice-Chairmen of the Commission. They are all distinguished diplomats whom we in the Commission know very well. We are happy that they are joining our Bureau.

It is my understanding that consultations are still under way in the regional groups with regard to their candidates for the remaining vice-chairmanships.

Besides the remaining Vice-Chairmen, the Commission must also nominate and elect the Chairmen of the three Working Groups. It is important that this be done as quickly as possible so that the Commission will be able smoothly to begin its substantive deliberations, and I hope that the regional groups will proceed with due urgency.

Programme of work and timetable

The Chairman (*interpretation from Spanish*): Members have before them document A/CN.10/1998/CRP.1, prepared by the Secretariat and setting out the general programme of work. This document shows the meeting rooms that have been set aside for the Commission, and also the meetings that have been scheduled for the subsidiary bodies. We will not take any action on this document today.

Members also have before them three informal papers prepared by the Secretariat which contain proposals for the timetables of meetings. In this connection, I would like to point out that the date 1997 appears in the upper left-hand corner of informal paper No. 3, when, in fact, it should say 1998. Please excuse us for this mistake.

These informal papers will be the subject of consultations with delegations and will be revised at the end of each week's work. We will make the necessary changes in accordance with those consultations held by the Chairman and bearing in mind the requirements of the subsidiary bodies, the Working Groups.

We have thus concluded our work for today regarding the election of the Chairman and other members of the Bureau, and I have also made this brief introduction regarding the proposed programme of work.

Before adjourning the meeting, I would like to give the floor to delegations for comments.

Mr. Souliotis (Greece) (*interpretation from French*): It is a pleasure to see you, Sir, once again chairing the work of our Commission. On behalf of my delegation, I would first like to thank the newly elected Vice-Chairmen, and I would also like to thank you for having distributed this documentation to us.

My delegation notes with regret that Friday, 17 April, is not going to be a holiday. In fact, this is the most solemn holy day for us and for millions of other Orthodox Christians. For this reason, this date should be borne in mind by the Secretariat in drawing up the timetable for our work. Of course, we do not have the right or the intention to object to the decision taken —

namely, to have a meeting on 17 April — but we hope that this will not set a precedent for the future.

The Chairman (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Commission and the Secretariat take note of these comments.

Mr. Spirin (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): First, I would like, on behalf of my delegation, to thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the efficient and vigorous manner in which you have conducted the work of the Commission. At the same time, I would like to support what has been said by the representative of Greece, who has drawn the Secretariat's and the Bureau's attention to the need to bear in mind the wishes of Orthodox Christians in preparing the Commission's timetable of work, and who has urged that, to the extent possible, Commission meetings not be planned for Friday, 17 April, it being an important holy day for quite a few Russian Orthodox Christians. On behalf of my delegation, I would also like to express the hope that, in further discussions regarding the preparation of the Commission's timetable, the Secretariat will bear in mind this wish expressed by my delegation and that of Greece.

Mr. Laptsenak (Belarus) (*interpretation from Russian*): Like others at today's meeting who participate on a permanent basis in the work of the Disarmament Commission, I would like to welcome you, Mr. Chairman, and to thank you for the very productive and effective efforts you have made throughout the period leading up to this meeting, thereby ensuring that the Commission's work will be productive. I would also like to assure all delegations that Belarus will do everything in its power to see that this constructive and efficient spirit prevails throughout our work at the Commission's substantive session this year.

On behalf of Mr. Martynov, I would like to thank the members of the Group of Eastern European States for having supported his candidacy and also all delegations here today for electing him by acclamation. I am certain that Mr. Martynov will be able personally to express his gratitude to members here as soon as he arrives. He plans to arrive in New York at the beginning of April — on 5 April, approximately. As soon as he arrives, he will begin close and intensive consultations with the members of the regional groups, with a view to resolving problems related to the formation of the Bureau of the substantive session and the timetable of work. I would expect that he will take note of the comments and wishes already expressed by the representatives of Greece and the Russian Federation as regards working out the details for the substantive session this year.

The Chairman (*interpretation from Spanish*): If there are no further requests to speak, once again I wish to express our satisfaction at the election of Mr. Martynov as Chairman of the Commission for the substantive session of 1998; the election of Ambassador Fernando Guillén of Peru to one of the vice-chairmanships; the election of the Deputy Permanent Representative of Ecuador, Emilio Izquierdo, to another of the vice-chairmanships; the election of the Deputy Permanent Representative of Ireland, Michael Hoey, to another vice-chairmanship; and the election of Mr. Vice Skračić as Rapporteur of our Commission.

Allow me once again to urge the regional groups to speed up their consultations and to submit their nominations still pending for vice-chairmanships and working-group chairmanships as quickly as possible.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.